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ABSTRACT

This bulletin is designed to provide an overview of teacher orientation practices and suggestions. Its primary audience is the building principals who find themselves responsible for orientation activities. The contents are based on extensive literature reviews, orientation materials and methods used by several selected Oregon school districts, and conclusions and recommendations from current dissertation research. The paper offers an analysis of orientation program objectives, an overview of the components of an effective orientation program, a review of the adjustment problems and the orientation concerns of newly placed teachers, remarks concerning administrative orientation responsibilities, approaches to orientation program planning, and recommendations. (Author/IRT)

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OSSC BULLETIN

INDUCTING NEWLY PLACED TEACHERS: ORIENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

by

James A. Badertscher

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PREFACE

This Bulletin provides practical suggestions for improved orientation programs for newly placed teachers. Adequate orientation information can eliminate many potential school problems.

Planning of typical orientation programs by central staff personnel often does not extend beyond central office concerns. There is a trend today toward having building principals responsible for the planning and delivery of orientation assistance.

In this Bulletin Dr. James Badertscher has summarized several essentials for teacher orientation from his dissertation titled "A Study of Elementary Principals' Judgment in Determining the Orientation Concerns of Newly Placed Elementary Teachers in Western Oregon." Included is a teacher value ranking of 44 common orientation items. In addition, teachers in his study provided an additional 16 items for consideration by those planning orientation sessions. Dr. Badertscher also identifies orientation items normally overestimated or underestimated in importance by principals.

Administrators with orientation responsibility for newly placed teachers will find the information in this Bulletin helpful in planning effective orientation programs.

Kenneth A. Erickson
Executive Secretary
Oregon School Study Council

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I. Introduction

The newly placed teacher, whether a neophyte or a veteran, enters the new working environment with certain anxieties, concerns, and problems. In many instances, teachers are left to struggle on their own. However, some school districts offer sound orientation programs designed to provide support, training, and guidance for the beginner. The presentation of orientation information to the newly placed teacher is critical. It may serve to enhance the attitudinal adjustment, as well as facilitate teacher growth and development. According to Conklin (1952), the orientation of the beginning teacher is one of the major responsibilities of the administrative staff of any school system.

Increasingly, the responsibility of orienting the newly placed teacher is assumed by the building principal. The administrative and supervisory support principals offer may be instrumental in helping the new teacher cope with stresses involved when entering the teaching profession. But, is the building principal prepared to assume that responsibility? Can that individual provide the newly placed teacher with the necessary information and support for a comfortable entry into the new teaching situation?

This bulletin is designed to provide an overview of teacher orientation practices and suggestions. Its primary audience is the building principals who find themselves responsible for orientation activities. The bulletin contents are based upon: extensive literature reviews, orientation materials and methods used by several selected Oregon school districts, and conclusions

and recommendations from current dissertation research conducted at the University of Oregon (1978) in which teachers and administrators of western Oregon participated.

The bulletin offers: (1) an analysis of orientation program objectives, (2) an overview of the components of an effective orientation program, (3) a review of the adjustment problems and the orientation concerns of newly placed teachers, (4) remarks concerning administrative orientation responsibilities, (5) approaches toward orientation program planning, and (6) selected orientation recommendations.

II. Orientation Program Objectives

Perhaps the most important aspect of an orientation program is its goal to aid the newcomer in effectively adapting into the new position. Objectives designed to attain this goal vary. Several authors have offered suggestions which serve to clarify and demonstrate how certain objectives may be best utilized to design and implement an efficient program of teacher orientation.

Fox (1954) refers to the need of acquainting and informing the beginner--a rather obvious objective of orientation. However, once this is understood and accepted, the problem is that of determining the most vital areas to which teachers should become acquainted and about which they should be informed. Fox recommends that orientation programs provide the beginner with information about students, about the school or district's organization and policies, about general and specific duties and responsibilities of the teaching position, and about available equipment, mate-

rials, and facilities. Overall, he urges that the objectives covered in orientation serve to aid the new teacher in total school adjustment.

In his article published by the NEA Journal, Jacobi (1959) stresses that an orientation program can be successful if it adheres to two concerns. First, the program should be designed to bridge the gap between preservice training and on-the-job experience by translating theory into practice. Here the author refers to the disparity between the theories discussed in university teacher training programs and the "real world." The second objective is that of promoting efficiency by helping the new teacher to learn how to do the immediate job effectively and quickly. One could grant that these concerns are important, perhaps imperative. Yet, one must consider that the methods used to achieve these objectives can be somewhat less than practically applied. The art of translating theory into practice is arduous. The amount of time generally allotted for new teacher orientation is hardly appropriate to allow this translation. Furthermore, the setting for orientation may not be suitable to such endeavors. The second objective offered by Jacobi is somewhat less than practical. It is questionable that an effective orientation can take place if the teacher is to adjust in the quickest time. Orientations are not accomplished in one day, nor in two. Most often, a proper orientation is one which is continuous--or at least one which offers assistance and guidance throughout various stages of the teacher's introductory year.

Once the objectives of the orientation program are agreed upon, program planners must determine the criteria to be followed in achieving the objectives. Hill (1961) established specific criteria which aid in

achieving these objectives.

1. It should be the explicit policy of the school board to approve and support an orientation program for all new members of the teaching staff.

2. The abilities of those individuals and groups with whom the new teacher needs to be oriented should be utilized in planning and carrying out the program.

3. The purposes and goals set forth in the planning phase of the orientation program should be stated in terms of the needs of the teachers new to the school system.

4. The orientation program should provide for systematic execution of the activities and for effective presentation of information in logical sequence and at the time of greatest need.

5. The orientation program should be evaluated continually in terms of its success in orienting teachers. (pp. 101-02)

It may prove beneficial to give a closer examination of Hill's criteria.

School board support for orientation programs should be in several forms. First, a written policy statement should exist which covers the orientation of new employees within the district. Additionally, individual board members should actively participate in orientation activities. Finally, budgetary allowances should reflect the board's interest and initiative to provide the new teachers with support.

The individuals and groups with whom the new teacher needs to be oriented can actively participate in the orientation of the beginner. Such individuals and groups include teachers, students, parents, community leaders, board members, business and civic leaders, and members of professional teaching organizations.

The purposes and goals set forth in the planning stages of the pro-

gram should reflect the problems and concerns of the new teacher. By regarding these problems and concerns, the orientation program may more appropriately attend to the orientation interests of the beginner.

The timing of information delivery is extremely important. Certain information and activities are needed at the time of hiring, immediately prior to the opening of school, during the first week, semester, and throughout the first professional year.

Evaluation of any objective can help in constructively facilitate improvement. Orientation programs are no exception. Evaluations should reflect an assessment of the complete scope of the orientation activities from planning through the final stages of information delivery.

Those charged with orienting the new arrival must consider the goal of their task, the appropriate steps to arrive at that goal, and the criteria involved in the development of an effective orientation program for the newly placed teacher.

III. Components of an Effective Orientation Program

An effective orientation program is one which is successful in achieving its stated goals and objectives in the most complete and efficient manner. There are several principles which are to be considered in designing just such a program. Schwalenberg (1965) offers a listing of these principles:

1. The objectives of the orientation program should be derived on the basis of the ascertained needs of the new and beginning teachers.

2. The administration should accept the responsibility of providing an organized orientation program for the new and beginning teachers.

3. All persons or agencies involved in presentation of the program should be included in the planning and coordination.

4. The community should be interested in the program of orientation and lay people used in planning and preparation.

5. The orientation should begin with the first interview and then progress in a timely manner through at least the first year of the new or beginning teacher's appointment.

6. The orientation program for new and beginning teachers must result in providing the teacher with sufficient skills and knowledge to enable that teacher to operate within the system in a secure manner.

7. Teacher orientation programs must complement the system's regular in-service education.

8. The teacher orientation program must be regularly evaluated in terms of the program's objectives by all cooperating persons and agencies. (p. 27)

The effective orientation is, however, somewhat more than these eight specific principles. There are no steadfast rules to follow, there is no one "best" recipe, and there is not a specialized formula which works for all districts. More specifically, each effective orientation program is a combination of finely-tuned personal efforts, well-defined direction, and coordinated procedures for information delivery. Each orientation program should be designed so as to best utilize personnel resources, to most efficiently cover the concerns of both teachers and district administration, and to most appropriately present the information in the allotted time.

IV. Concerns of the Newly Placed Teacher

Most beginning teachers, unfamiliar with the routines and procedures of a particular building or district, find themselves under a certain amount of stress which is related to their personal, professional, and social adjustment. These stress-causing concerns are as varied as the individuals who suffer from them. It is for this reason that persons who are responsible for orientation activities and information delivery be alert to the problems of eacn individual teacher. Much information which relates to central office concerns must be provided to the beginner. However, information which is required by the teachers must also receive consideration. Orientation programs that fail to offer complete information--concerns of the district and the teacher--are remiss.

Newly placed teachers are often unaware of the full scope of adjustment problems they will encounter when entering into the new position. Ryan (1974) discusses several of the adjustment problems which are common to the newly placed teacher.

culture shock-the newness and discomfort associated with unfamiliar settings.

instruction-uncertainties about requirements, methods, and adaptation to the needs of learners with varying abilities.

students-situations of student discipline, classroom management, and academic facilitation styles.

parents-conferencing and general interaction.

administrators-observation and evaluation techniques.

fellow teachers-acceptance and supportive assistance.

isolation-inability to adapt to the "swing" of the school's tempo.

In a more general fashion, it can be said that many of the problems which confront the beginning teacher relate to their relationships with students, to their competence as teachers, and to their relationships with colleagues. The orientation program for new teachers can be genuinely supportive when it is designed to facilitate adjustment. Noda (1968) comments on the aim of the orientation program which is designed for just such facilitation:

> The foremost aim of the program is to assist the beginning teacher in his personal and professional growth at his point of entry into the profession. It is assumed that a program of assistance at this juncture is especially significant, for the beginning teacher generally experiences many problems and develops attitudes and techniques which are likely to affect significantly his future as a teacher. In addition, the program is intended to provide the fledgling teacher with a bridge between idealism and realism, between theory and practice, and between the academic setting of the University and the realistic, demanding environment of the classroom. (p. 63)

It is important to point out that the adjustment support given to the new teacher is needed throughout the first year of the profession. It is also noteworthy to consider the importance of providing adjustment assistance to experienced and veteran teachers, if needed.

How can we go about determining the adjustment concerns of the teachers new to our building? We could rely upon our judgment--making arbitrary decisions as to what information to pass to them; we could look at orientation programs offered in other districts of similar size and organization; or we could review what the literature on teacher orientation identifies as important to the beginner. An examination of the literature would reveal that the identified needs and concerns that must be considered during orientation program planning are quite vast in both scope and quantity.

Lueck (1965) conducted a study with two hundred forty prospective teachers (with student teaching experience) in an effort to discover their major concerns about their entry into the teaching profession. A resulting rank order of their twelve most common concerns follows:

1. Conducting the class session effectively, asking stimulating questions, supervising study.
2. Motivating student learning, getting students to study and master their lessons.
3. Teaching students to study, including helping them to read more effectively, remember longer, and develop better work habits.
4. Attaining and maintaining good discipline in the classroom so that effective learning can take place.
5. Knowing the subject matter taught.
6. Planning for teaching, such as planning for courses, units of work, and daily assignments.
7. Adjusting instruction to slow, average, and fast learners.
8. Making effective assignments, initiating projects and activities.
9. Testing, evaluating, and grading the work of students.
10. Getting ready for the first day of school, checking if textbooks and supplies are available, etc.
11. Supervising an extracurricular activity like the student council, athletic club, or debating team.
12. Living in the community, contributing to the community efforts, and working with local people.

The concerns listed here include concerns of self-preparation, student welfare, aspects of community life, and aspects of their position duties beyond the classroom itself. The concerns relate to the school, the position, and the community.

A study done by Wallace (1948), of one hundred thirty-six teachers already in teaching positions, resulted in a ranking of their most pressing concerns. The first ten follow:

1. Learning administrative routines, reports, and procedures.
2. Gaining an understanding of the school's system of evaluating pupil achievement.
3. Disciplinary problems.
4. Conditions of work-inadequate materials.
5. Gaining a clear and workable understanding of the school's philosophy and objectives.
6. Establishing good student-teacher relationships.
7. Problems of professional adjustment to other teaching personnel.
8. Conditions of work-inadequate building facilities.
9. Teacher-class loads.
10. Demands for teacher's time and energy after school.

The concerns in the listing provided by Wallace relate to many of the same concerns identified in the Lueck study. Here, however, the concerns expand a bit further to include the district administration, and to the expectations of administrators, teachers, students, and other persons who are generally cognizant of the teaching activity.

One might be inclined to set about designing an orientation program which incorporates a combination of the two preceding lists. This should be cautioned, primarily because of the first of the two listings was compiled in the early sixties, the other in 1948. Are the concerns of beginning teachers the same today?

Dissertation research (Badertscher: 1978) was conducted at the University of Oregon which related to administrative accuracy in judging the orientation concerns of the newly placed elementary teacher in western Oregon. Although the primary purpose of this dissertation research was to assess administrative accuracy, it was first necessary to identify orientation needs of teachers. Sixty-six teachers gave value ratings to each of forty-four selected orientation program items. The items were chosen from various orientation handbooks used by several western Oregon school districts, from reoccurring concerns identified in the literature, and from elementary principal suggestions. The forty-four orientation items follow, in order of decreasing value. It should be noted that the orientation items are listed in order of greater to lesser values, and that not all items are equally valuable to all teachers.

V. Teacher Ranking of Orientation Item Values

Explanation of...

1. curricular concerns (teaching responsibilities)
2. established procedures for student discipline
3. district resource handbook (where to, when to, and how to...)
4. testing, record keeping and record interpretation responsibilities
5. support personnel and services (a.v., professional library, consultants)
6. procedures for acquisition of materials and supplies
7. procedures for referring students for remediation

8. parent conferencing responsibilities

9. policies and procedures for grading students

10. procedures for teacher observations and evaluations

11. availability of enrichment materials

12. conditions of employment (work hours, employee benefits)

13. classroom management (room arrangement, classroom discipline)

14. payday and salary schedules

15. auxiliary schedules for lunch, music, physical education, etc.

16. recommended student motivation techniques

17. board personnel policies (attendance, leave, transfer, substitutes)

18. information on both required and voluntary committees, meetings, assemblies

19. lesson planning

20. yearly school calendar

21. building handbook of printed schedules and routines

22. special education programs and procedures

23. non-teaching duty requirements (playground, lunchroom)

24. dominant parental concerns (educational priorities)

25. parental classroom involvement

26. policies relating to field trips, parties, etc.

27. requirements of accounting for students (attendance, class register)

28. district's teacher in-service program

29. legal concerns (teacher liability)

30. clerical procedures required of teachers (forms, filing)

31. availability of building programs and personnel resources

32. available community instructional resources and services

33. negotiated contract

34. responsibilities for classroom maintenance

35. procedures for equipment operation and use (business machines, projectors)

36. socio-economic makeup of the community

37. building security procedures

38. teacher professional organization information

39. district educational statistics (number of students, teachers; yearly progress reports on student achievement)

40. teacher grievance procedures

41. Parent/Teacher Association goals and activities

42. school site limitations on personal services (phone, mail)

43. district administration organizational flow chart

44. regulations concerning use of facilities when school is not in session

It is of value to identify several items which teachers ranked which are not included in the listings from earlier studies. Concerns of remediation procedures, special education programs, negotations, grievance procedures, and contract information are now added to the increasing list of items about which the newly placed teacher needs to be informed. There are other items of orientation which teachers also need. The listing of forty-four is in no way complete, mainly due to the inability of attending to all individual concerns of every new teacher. Responding teachers in the 1978 study provided additional orientation items beyond those listed

on the questionnaire to which they responded. Some selected additional informational areas are:

1. Information on team teaching or open classrooms.
2. District policies on promotion and retention.
3. Social activities at the building level.
4. Accumulation of comp time.
5. Information on writing academic objectives.
6. Explanations as to the use of standard teaching materials.
7. Tour of school enrollment area.
8. Specialized meetings with grade level members.
9. Use of para-professionals.
10. Learning principal's priorities.
11. Understanding goals of the building.
12. Information on school staff working relations.
13. Learning group process skills.
14. Gaining a focus on staff development.
15. Activities of individual goal-setting.
16. Discussions of credit union benefits.

Perhaps the most appropriate answer to the question--what are the orientation concerns of the newly placed teacher?--is "one can never be sure." For this reason, it may prove to be advantageous to principals and supervisors charged with orienting the beginning teacher to first determine the required district information which must be presented, and secondly to ascertain from each individual teacher the specific concerns

and problem areas which need attention. As previously mentioned, there is no formula for making the orientation decisions. Decisions are based on identified adjustment problems and orientation concerns which are never the same for all new teachers.

VI. Administrators' Orientation Responsibilities

School administrators are generally aware that their support and encouragement is a vital addition to the newcomer's introduction. The literature strongly supports the contention that the orientation responsibility lies heavily upon the administrative staff. Principals do not take it for granted that the newly arriving teacher comes into the position fully knowledgeable of the teaching duties.

Regardless of the administrative team's makeup, the newly placed teacher turns to the building principal or that person's representative when help or explanations are needed. Orientation programs which are offered by the central office staff rarely extend beyond central office concerns. And, as orientation programs are increasingly becoming the responsibility of the building principal, their input and reaction to program design and delivery is essential. Gorton (1973) examines the necessity of principals' interaction during the orientation period: "A key factor in any program is the principal. There can be research study after research study, followed by recommendations for improvement and yet more recommendations for improvement, but little progress will be made unless the principal exerts leadership."

The leadership and direction given by the building principal must be soundly based on the most appropriate method of information, selection,

and delivery. Activities and processes of induction must be substantiated so as to allow credence to their selection. Principals and supervisors must be more than merely accessible or available. They need to seek out the problems of the beginner and attend to those needs. The pleasant principal who gives offers of general help is not performing totally. Often, the new teacher does not know what help or guidance is needed until a crisis develops. The principal may help to avert the crisis by actively directing the beginner in complex situations.

It is essential that the building principal serve as an orientation program planner. An alert program planner must first examine relevant literature on the topic of orientation. In so doing, an analysis of induction program components can be conducted and program designs may be examined. Perhaps most importantly, a review of orientation research by the building principal in charge of planning the orientation program may lead to the discovery of areas of beginning teacher discontent, so often attributed to ineffective orientation programs.

Throughout the orientation program planning process, the building principal must give consideration to various questions. What is the beginning teacher really like? Attention to this question may assist in determining the best method of selecting the informational areas to be covered during the program. What should the teacher be like after a successful orientation? An accurate assessment of this concern may lead to choosing the most appropriate design of information delivery. Finally, it is important to realize--what kind of orientation is likely to produce the desired changes? The answer to this question might reveal valuable

clues as to the proper organization and timing involved in program planning.

The challenges which are faced in orientation program planning at times seem insurmountable. Yet, by giving proper, attentive consideration to the individual needs of the newly placed teacher, the end result of the effort will pay dividends which more than justify the investment. Lloyd (1960) contends: "The ultimate task of the principal or supervisor is to study the growth level of each teacher, to recognize in which areas growth is lacking, and through careful planning of meetings and conferences, to lead each teacher to seek development to the highest potential." By assessing the individual needs of each of the newly placed teachers of a particular building, the principal can be more responsive to the responsibilities involved in the planning and implementation of the orientation program.

VII. Principals Assess Teacher Orientation Concerns

The 1978 dissertation research mentioned previously was primarily designed to assess the level of administrative accuracy in judging the orientation value given by teachers to selected items commonly included in new teacher induction programs. Sixty-eight elementary principals in western Oregon responded to questionnaires by choosing the value of each orientation item that they anticipated teachers would choose. Principals were selected from the same districts in which newly placed teacher selections were made.

Overall, the principals demonstrated a rather phenomenal accuracy. There were, however, several areas of disparity between values given by teachers and values given by principals. The following four items of orientation represent significant overestimations by principals. Teachers gave specific value ratings to each of these items, but principals inaccurately anticipated that teachers would have given the items higher value ratings.

classroom management (room arrangement and discipline)

requirements for accounting for students (attendance, class register)

non-teaching duty requirements (playground, lunchroom)

building handbook of printed schedules and routines

It is interesting to note that teachers gave lower value ratings to these items than principals anticipated that they would. All items relate to peripheral responsibilities of the actual teaching activity. Another possible explanation is that several of these concerns could possibly develop into crisis situations if not properly attended.

Five orientation items were underestimated by the principals, indicating that the principals thought teachers would give lower value ratings than the teachers actually did. These five items of orientation follow:

testing, record keeping and interpretation responsibilities of the teacher

policies and procedures for grading students

procedures for referring students for remediation

availability of enrichment materials

recommended student motivation techniques

It is worth noting that all five items relate to the welfare of students. Further, most can be related to the actual teaching activity. The first four of the five items were included in the top fifteen highest valued orientation items selected by teachers. None of the first four were in the listing of the top fifteen orientation items that principals identified as being valuable to the newly placed teacher. In this instance, principals failed to accurately assess the value of these specific items although overall principal accuracy was very strong.

VIII. Approaches to Planning Orientation Programs

The most critical aspect of orientation programs is that of organization. Organization involves selection of the areas of orientation information to be provided, the timing of information presentation, the method of information delivery, and an evaluation of the program after it has been implemented.

Selection of Orientation Information

School districts typically have much information which must be conveyed to the beginning teacher in the system. Assorted policies, regulations, administrative criteria, and general operational information must be shared with all new teachers. Orientation programs generally attend to the district concerns just mentioned, however, the most effective orientation programs offer information beyond these, extending to orientation assistance toward the position, the school, and in many instances, the community.

Orientation program planners must use caution in developing the informational areas to be covered. Not all teachers need the same amount or type of support. It is for this reason that orientation program planners should selectively design a program which attends to the needs, problems, and concerns of each teacher. For example, experienced teachers may not be interested in assistance with student motivation or classroom management skills.

One method of ascertaining the concerns of each new teacher would be to provide that teacher with a checklist of potential orientation information items. Such a list could be developed from the listing of concerns which have been identified by teachers (see p. 9-14). Additional items may be added by individual teachers. This list should reflect an attempt to cover various concerns of orientation such as understanding the teaching load, in-service opportunities, becoming acquainted with the individual building facilities and support personnel, understanding the district philosophy, understanding and managing assorted teaching materials, becoming acquainted with supervisory services, and learning school and district policies. Once the orientation program planner has determined the informational areas to be covered, the next decision is that of selecting the most appropriate time to present this information to the beginner.

Timing the Presentation of Information

In years past, those school districts which did offer orientation programs for the teachers new to the system, did so *en masse*. Often, one or two days prior to the beginning of the school year were set aside to bring in all new teachers and "orient" them. In situations such as this,

all new teachers heard the same speakers and received much the same information. Little attention was given to the individual questions with which the teachers were concerned. Some school districts still provide such a formalized introduction.

Information which is presented to all teachers at the same time should only relate to that which is needed by all. Other information which is more pertinent to individual situations and problems should follow at more appropriate times. For example, all information that new teachers must become familiarized with should not be given in one or two orientation sessions. Some information about the teaching responsibilities is unnecessary until well into the teaching year. The orientation materials presented at the beginning of the year should relate specifically to what the teacher needs to know during the first several weeks of employment. Remarks about grading, conferencing, support services, and a host of other items can be effectively provided after the newcomer has had some time to settle into the situation.

The presentation of information should reflect the district's concern for the adjustment of the new teacher. Initial orientation attempts should allow the teacher to adjust socially and personally, as well as professionally. After the beginner is somewhat established and operating in a relatively secure fashion, additional orientation information can be offered in a timely and appropriate manner. The timing of delivery is paramount. Over-informing can be as hazardous as under-informing. Orientation program planners must keep this concept in mind when organizing the orientation session. The mere presentation of information is not

adequate. Knowing when to offer specific orientation information is as important as knowing what to present and how it should be presented.

Methods of Information Delivery

Choosing the most effective and appropriate method of delivering orientation topics includes being alert to four major questions. First, who should assume the responsibility? A primary participant is the building principal. The leadership of this position should be exerted in all phases of the orientation of new staff members. Others who may provide supportive assistance are the superintendent, director of personnel, curriculum specialist, teachers, support personnel, and many more. Selected individuals or groups may be most effective in presenting certain information. Examples might include having the personnel director relate to areas of policy, contract, and employee benefits. The curriculum specialist may inform new staff about textbook selections, areas of instruction, and time allotments for each subject. Audiovisual personnel, business office employees, and specific individuals in other areas of specialization may round out the list of participants chosen to provide the most thorough approach to orienting the beginner.

Participants chosen to provide the beginner with the orientation information need not all present on the same day, nor even during the same session. These participants may select times later in the year to offer information about their services. Constructive participation can best be described as taking place when it is both most useful and most timely.

A third question to be considered is—where should the orientation take place? Formal orientation programs for all new staff, in which

district remarks are made to all teachers, may take place in a large group setting. There are other settings which may more effectively offer information which is not related to the total group. Building level concerns can be offered more appropriately in individual buildings. This session may also be more practical for sessions of socialization. It is in this smaller, less restrictive environment that individual teachers may feel more comfortable in asking questions about their new appointment. Perhaps an even more secure setting for the beginner is each grade level. In this instance, teachers can ask very specific questions concerning the curriculum, students, parents, administration, and more. This is also a very important approach to social adjustment. Orientations need not be limited to settings of district offices and schools. There are instances when orientations can take place just as effectively in other locales.

After orientation program planners have determined the information to be shared, by whom it should be presented, the time it should be presented, and the location where the presentation may be most effective, they should consider a fourth and final question--how should it be presented? There are varied approaches to orientation information presentation, but no single approach is appropriate for all topics or settings. The following is a listing of the more conventional methods of delivering orientation information to the newly placed teacher:

demonstrations by experienced staff

large or small group meetings

individual and group conferences

small group sessions (subject/grade level)

lecture sessions

tours or observations

in-service workshops

professional consultants

informational bulletins

letters of welcome

publications

handbooks of school or district

These methods of information delivery should be incorporated into several session styles such as one-day, on-going, pre-school, or post-school opening.

Orientation Program Evaluation

If orientation programs are organized carefully to assure the most effective use of time, personnel, activities, resources, materials, and information, in most cases they would be considered efficient and thorough. However, evaluations should be conducted to confirm or negate this estimate. Specialized evaluation formats should be designed which assess participants, areas of information, delivery, planning, and any other aspects being considered for future orientation use. Perhaps the best people to evaluate the program are those who are involved in all planning phases and those for whom the orientation was designed. Constructive criticism may serve to enhance the total program. Failures should be selectively identified and remedied. Input into the evaluation should not be viewed as threatening, but encouraging. If participants are interested enough to comment, their concerns should receive attention.

On-going evaluations should be an integral part of approaches toward productive improvement of orientation efforts.

IX. Selected Orientation Recommendations

The seven recommendations which follow are a result of an extensive review of the literature on teacher orientation, coupled with concerns identified in a recent orientation study (Badertscher: 1978) conducted at the University of Oregon. Newly placed teachers and building principals provided information which can be synthesized as follows:

1. Principals should not rely solely upon their own judgment in determining the informational areas to be included in an orientation program for newly placed teachers.

Principals may be well aware of orientation responsibilities at the building level. However, they are oftentimes unable to provide beginning teachers with all the information which is needed for them to operate securely in the total school system. For this reason, it is imperative that the building principal or building supervisor enlist the collaborative efforts of school system personnel who can relay the necessary orientation information in the most effective and supportive fashion.

2. During the orientation program planning stage, principals should confer with newly placed teachers individually to more appropriately design an orientation program which is responsive to each teacher's most pressing orientation concerns.

A vital component in any new teacher orientation program is to

alleviate the problems and anxieties which plague the new employee. Induction planning should begin immediately after the new teacher is hired, giving consideration to the orientation concerns that are identified by the beginner. One aspect which may or may not be highly valued by the beginner is that of orientation for personal or social adjustment. For neophyte teachers, being accepted by other staff members is generally a primary concern. Experienced teachers, however, may choose not to identify this as an important orientation program component. As a result, the principal must assess each individual teacher's concerns in determining to what extent orientation aid of this type is needed.

During the early stages of induction, principals must distinguish between what information can be given to the new teacher at a later time and what information should be promptly offered. Principals must keep this in mind when designing the orientation program.

Many principals and newly placed teachers are unaware of the full scope of adjustment problems to be encountered by the new teacher. On the other hand, there are some newly placed teachers who know just what information will enhance their entry into the new working environment. By conferring with new teachers individually, principals and other orientation program planners can better assess the needs of each teacher. These are often disparate because of individual teaching background differences, personal concerns, or a host of other situational variables.

3. Orientation programs should help to orient the beginner into the position, the school, the district, and the community.

Orientation program planners must be cognizant of the variety of

information to which newly placed teachers need exposure. An orientation program which is limited in scope cannot be thorough. The principal who offers induction information relating only to the position or the school is neglecting the total responsibility that accompanies effective orientation program planning. It must be stressed that although orientation information is often limited, a properly balanced program is one that incorporates information from the four areas mentioned.

4. Orientation information which is of lesser value to the teacher should be presented after information of greater value and/or priority.

In most instances, the amount of time allotted for orienting the new teacher is limited. Because time is a constraining factor, its effective utilization should employ the presentation of the most vital orientation topics.

Logic is still another factor that must be considered in information presentation. There is information which should precede entry into the position, information that should be presented at the beginning of the school year, and still other information that is unnecessary until well into the teaching year. Program planners need to be alert to the priority of information presentation. This priority should relate to the concerns of both the teachers and the administrators, to time constraints, and to the logic of presentation sequence.

5. Orientation information should serve to relieve teachers' apprehension toward concerns of self-preparation, students' welfare, and administrative expectations.

As identified throughout the literature on teacher orientation concerns,

teachers are primarily concerned with these aspects of the teaching activity. Teachers are often uncertain as to the effectiveness of their professional training with regard to student motivational techniques and approaches toward disciplining. Concerns of training adequacy in these areas may result in queries of self-preparation which teachers bring with them when assuming the teaching role. Orientation support can serve to diminish these concerns of professional inadequacy. However, if beginning teachers do not request assistance toward professional self-improvement, orientation planners must use caution before deciding to include this type of information and support during the orientation program.

Teacher apprehension about the welfare of students is evident in their concerns toward lesson planning, guiding student discussions, stimulating student interest, and adapting instructional techniques to best suit the varying abilities and needs of class members. Orientation programs which provide guidance to the new teacher and information related to student welfare strengthen the induction process, and enhance the teacher's knowledge of available resources and services.

Teachers are aware of the many expectations of school administrators. And, as a result, they are concerned with knowing the full responsibilities of their teaching role. These concerns toward administrative expectations may stem from teachers' desire to build a secure working relationship with the principal and gain administrative support and respect.

When orientation programs attend to the concerns of teachers toward

self-preparation, students' welfare, and administrative expectations, the apprehension level of the beginner can be lowered.

6. Orientation emphasis should be given to the many policies, procedures, and processes related to the teaching activity.

Often, the highest ranked orientation concerns of beginning teachers relate to these topics. The ten most highly ranked orientation concerns of western Oregon teachers follow (Badertscher: 1978):

Explanation of...

curricular concerns (teaching responsibilities)

established procedures for student discipline

district resource handbook (where to, when to, how to...)

testing, record keeping and interpretation responsibilities of the teacher

support personnel and services (a.v., professional library, consultants)

procedures for acquisition of materials and supplies

procedures for referring students for remediation

parent conferencing responsibilities

policies and procedures for grading students

procedures for teacher observations and evaluations

It can be argued that most orientation information falls into several of the above categories. However, not all orientation information is as imperative as these ten items. As a result, orientation program planners must be capable and willing to: first, assess the value of their input information; second, plan a proper and timely delivery of the information; and third, provide a thorough explanation which helps the beginning teacher

to fully understand the policies, procedures, and processes involved in the performance of teaching and related responsibilities.

7. Orientation program planning procedures should employ the expertise of personnel with previous orientation program planning experience.

Each year, orientation programs should build upon the successes of previous programs and avoid the pitfalls of the less effective programs. By encouraging experienced program planners to continue designing orientation programs, the programs resulting should reflect an accurate coverage of new teacher concerns and a more efficient and effective approach.

The orientation literature urges administrative participation in all stages of orientation program development and delivery. It is not enough to provide an orientation program based only on input from central office staff. Principals must exert the leadership and expertise of their position. Teachers most often turn to the principal for help with the problems they encounter. Therefore, principals may be able to provide substantial input into the orientation program, based on the concerns which have emerged from their discussions with new teachers. Continued orientation program participation by principals on a year to year basis should serve to strengthen the expertise of the administrator, as well as enhance the supportive input which is offered to aid the induction of newly placed teachers.

X. Concluding Remarks

New teacher induction programs deserve the attention of building

principals. Their support, guidance, and training can serve as a very positive addition to the overall design of a properly fashioned orientation program.

By actively participating in the induction of newly placed teachers, principals may: (1) demonstrate their willingness to offer support to the beginner, (2) offer valuable orientation insight, based on the expertise of their supervisory position, (3) gain a more thorough understanding of the orientation concerns of new teachers, and (4) assist in orientation program improvement with continued evaluative and innovative recommendations.

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